DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 057 453 EA 003 839

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TITLE Focus on the Individual: The Mandate for Effective Education and Training.
PUB DATE Aug 71
NOTE 20p.; Speech given at American Management Association Annual Conference and Exposition on Educational Training (7th, New York, N.Y., August 3-5, 1971)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS *Education; Educational Demand; Educational Objectives; *Individualism; Management; *Relevance (Education); Self Actualization; Social Change; *Speeches; *Training

ABSTRACT

Government, business, and the public are demanding better education and training programs. The shortcomings of education and training lie not in financial lack but in the absence of relevance, good timing, and efficient objectives. By emphasizing the development of the individual, education and training can become relevant in a world of increasing complexity and rapid change. Inservice education and retraining programs should be developed to combat occupational obsolescence, and the objectives should be reordered to prepare the individual to know "how" to live rather than simply to know "about" life. (RA)

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FOCUS ON THE INDIVIDUAL
THE MANDATE FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Keynote Address, American Management Association
7th Annual Conference and Exposition on Education and Training
New York City
August 3-5, 1971

By
Gerry E. Morse, Vice President, Honeywell Inc.

The demand for more effective education and training comes from all sides. It comes from Government, which sees it as an essential to the sound solution of key social problems. It comes from parents, who count it vital if their hopes for their children are to be fulfilled. It comes from consumers and producers, who press it as one avenue to long-run relief from mounting costs and under-employment. It comes from the disadvantaged, who claim it as an all too often denied right and their most likely means for moving out from the backwaters of our society into its mainstream. It comes from students, quietly or violently, but persistently, because they know it to be a major determinant, for them, of future success or failure.

With so clear a mandate, what are the barriers? Certainly we are spending vast amounts of time, money, and talent on education and training -- more than ever before. Certainly we have great numbers of people engaged in supplying and receiving education and training -- more than ever before. Certainly we have a flood of new facilities, new techniques, and new content for education and training -- far more than ever before. What then is wrong?

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Careful, objective, practical evaluation of our education and training programs discloses just too many facets which raise doubts as to relevance, timing, or objective.

Relevance

Underlying the more responsible and constructive student challenges to our education system is either an understanding or an intuition of the need for its relevance to the life ahead -- not to life as it was -- not to life as it is now -- but to life 10, 20, 50 years ahead. The critical factor is the rate of change. We older adults take change calmly or fretfully but always against a background of considerable stability. Today's young people sense only the speeding pace -- the irresistible pull of the mid-stream current. "Since they were born the jet plane, color TV, the computer, antibiotics, space travel, and a hundred other miracles have come to full flower. Since they were born, we have graduated more doctors, more scientists, more lawyers, more engineers, and more teachers than in all the past five centuries." (1)

"By the end of this century, just one generation, or less than 30 years ahead, our population in the United States will be about 300 million. By 1985, just 14 years from now, the addition to our population will have been as many people as presently live in all 24 states West of the Mississippi. There will be a dramatic rise in the number of younger adults. One-sixth of all jobs will be in three states, Florida, Texas, and California. More and more Americans will be employed in the production of services; fewer and fewer in the production of goods. We shall see vast increases in the number of Government employees. Education, which now generates about 6% of our annual gross national product, will approach 20% by the year 2000."(1) The student query, "What education is relevant to my life

ahead?" urgently requires our best answer.

But it is not the student alone who challenges the relevance of current education. During the past month, apparently in response to the distribution of the announcement of this Conference, several academicians - teachers, professors, and deans - have voiced to me their own concerns. One for example, described an urban elementary school experiment with ungraded instruction -- a serious reexamination of the possible relevance of some return to the little red schoolhouse such as our great grandparents knew. Another asked cooperation with an experimental college in which instruction will be not only off-campus but without classrooms. A third, a graduate school dean, shared his increasing dissatisfactions with the rigidities and ineffectiveness of a professorial system based too much on tenure, specialization, and compartmentation. Additionally, I assume most of you have read and are stirred by Dr. Livingston's article earlier this year, "The Myth of the Well Educated Manager."(2) He, too, makes a quite convincing case for the measure of the relevancy of education to be the degree to which it goes beyond "about" life into "how to" live.

Business leaders also dealing continually with change -- in economics, government regulations, technology, and the social climate in which they operate -- recognize the need for relevancy. A year ago, from this very platform, Mr. Harrison Dunning, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Scott Paper Company, said, "Many young people have felt overt, physical acts would somehow hasten the day of change in those facets of our society of which they disapprove....They don't like what they see, partly, I am persuaded, because they don't fully understand, but also because much of what they see is not good.

They will be the generation that has to correct these present ills, and in order to enable them to do that, we must provide...education... with an acute relevance to the world in which they will live."(3)

Mr. Arthur A. Shenfield, an English economist, lawyer, and advisor to governments and businesses, speaks to our situation with the detachment of an outside observer. In a lecture at Rockford, Illinois, in April 1971, he stated,...."in the modern American university there are men who are capable of works of monumental non-scholarship or anti-scholarship...Thus, the traditional America of law and liberty, work and enterprise, becomes presented as a superseded failure...How did these ideas get into the ascendant?...Unfortunately, though merit may perhaps be decisive in the long run; it has little to do with the short or medium term ebb and flow of ideas. In fact, most of the leading 'liberal' ideas of our time...in the twisted American sense of the word liberal (i.e., illiberal)...are revivals of long-exploded fallacies of the pre-liberal era...The ideas of the past are at war with the ideas of the future...I have said that [the so-called] liberal ideas display the characteristic features of ideas in the ascendant. But I also believe that they are somewhere near their apogee....The beginnings of the revival of the humane, civilized, truly liberal ideas which created the American Republic are already detectable by the far-sighted....The great majority do not see so far because they do not appreciate that ideas have a life cycle....On television, in public debate, and on the campus [the so-called] liberal ideas still make the most noise and hold the most commanding heights. But look closer at what is happening on the campus....Serious scholars among [the so-called] liberals are uneasily

aware of the shoals on which they stand. Among serious students see how well classical ideas are now being received...I do not say that the process of revival must inevitably lead to ascendancy. A disordered world is more likely to listen to soothsayers than to scholars, and the descent to totalitarianism is distinctly possible. But in America the issue depends upon the recovery of a confidence in itself...This is not an impossible task."(4)

The point he makes is critical. He reminds us that education not only prepares us for the future, it is a key factor in shaping the future.

The need for relevance in education is paralleled by an equally compelling need for relevance in training. Last week I was startled to hear someone say that the Michigan State management course offered off-campus in Detroit limits the number of participants per session from General Motors to 20; from Ford, to 10; and from Chrysler, to 6. He didn't even mention American Motors. If that training is relevant to improving profit or increasing market share, those proportions certainly seem wrong. Seriously, though, unless training is clearly tied to the individual employee's job performance and career development it is not worth the time and money. Unfortunately, all too many training people drift into offering a cafeteria assortment of neatly-packaged, standardized courses which they then peddle from department to department, or location to location. They attend training conventions, exchange ideas with their like-minded counterparts from other organizations and oogle the latest teaching machinery in the hope of maintaining sufficient appetite for their wares. That such training is so often not relevant is demonstrated by the speed with which the axe is wielded whenever top management faces

budget problems or a need to cut costs.

Another sobering check on the relevance of our training efforts is posed by those for the disadvantaged so many of which have been interrupted by the heavy layoffs of the past 18 months. Here I quote, precisely, a successful Black manager. He has both line management and corporate staff management experience. He writes, "Now that industry has largely forgotten about 'hard core', EEO, and all that jazz and taken to throwing up its collective hands with the excuse 'the economy is soft', we might ask what did training people learn from recent experiences? This is important because there is every reason to believe the equation: Minority Unemployment + Frustration + Majority Neglect = Riots, will be at work in major cities across the country. And when that happens government always passes the ball to industry and we are asked to <u>save society</u>. Only last time we screwed it up with demeaning 'store front' training locations, menial dead-end jobs, non-relevant education, and condescending smugness, to the point we won't be able to con the same people twice. 'Training the Disadvantaged' as a crusade didn't die, it's only figeting around idle on ghetto street corners waiting for some Black or Spanish kid to throw the first brick. And after the noise dies down it will be dumped right back in our laps. Are we ready?"

All of these considerations lead us inevitably to focus on the individual. Whether we look at education or at training, relevance for the future does indeed demand such a focus. That, however, is far easier to say than to do. Focus on the individual is difficult without specific knowledge of and sensitive concern for the person

himself and for the environment in which he does and will live or work. It is a rare individual who can respond successfully to education or training in a non-supporting climate, no matter how professionally presented, sophisticated, or previously successful our program. Furthermore, all too often the individually focused effort at education or training has become so complex administratively that it has failed. It has either been abandoned in frustration or had its focus shifted back to the process itself. We continue to give little more than lip-service to freedom of individual expression in most institutions or organizations. Too frequently our assertion that "the individual student or employee is our most important concern" is regarded as poppy-cock by those of whom we speak.

Thus, the very turmoil of our time should signal to us that we may now be crossing a bridge between an established group society and a new individualism. "Future Shock", the latest book of Alvin Toffler, contains an illuminating comment. "Clearly a consequence of mass production techniques, the uniformity of certain aspects of our physical environment, has long outraged intellectuals....our ability to produce millions of nearly identical units is the crowning achievement of the industrial age. Thus, when intellectuals bewail the sameness of our material goods, they accurately reflect the state of affairs....However, they reveal shocking ignorance about the character of [the future]. Focused on what society was, they are blind to what it is fast becoming. For the society of the future will offer not a restricted, standardized flow of goods, but the greatest variety of unstandardized goods and services any society has ever seen....The end of standardization is already in sight....As technology becomes more sophisticated, the cost of introducing variations declines.... Automation....frees the path to endless, blinding, mind-numbing

diversity. Does any of this matter? Some people argue that diversity in the material environment is insignificant so long as we are racing toward cultural or spiritual homogeneity....This view gravely underestimates the importance of material goods as symbolic expressions of human personality differences, and it foolishly denies a connection between the inner and outer environment....By increasing the diversity of goods available to man we increase the mathematical probability of differences in the way men actually live.

"More important, however, is the very premise that we are racing toward cultural homogeneity, since a close look at this also suggests that the opposite is true. It is unpopular to say this, but we are moving swiftly toward fragmentation and diversity not only in material production, but in art, education, and....culture as well."(5)

Our most credible indicators predict a future of increasing complexity, diversity, and rate of change. To be relevant to such a life of greater and greater ranges of choice, both material and cultural, our education and training must be clearly and sharply focused on the individual.

Timing

The complexity and rate of change of modern life is also a great challenge to effective timing of education and training. No doubt many of you have suffered with me that sinking feeling which comes with the discovery that in our teaching we have dropped behind what the practitioners are already doing. This is a relatively new phenomenon. In simpler, slower-paced societies, the mere living of life was itself a major means of education and training. The Prince learned how to be King as much or more through simple exposure

and participation as through any formal education or training. So, too, did the wainwrights' son, the daughter of the lady-in-waiting, or the sheepherdess. Formal education or training could then devote itself to anticipating future, more or less clearly predictable, developments, or to broadening the base of interest in or understanding of peripheral concerns.

In modern times, until very recently, observation and participation continued to be the main vehicles of education and training. Most formal education was heavily practice oriented, and our standard formula for training was "90% on the job". This led to the acceptance of the notion that education or training was preparatory and somehow to the fallacious concept that education was apart from life, an adjunct to or escape from the practical world; in other words, that there was some difference between theory and practice. This view has been sharply jolted as a result of the drop in our economy during 1970 and 1971. Thirty thousand professional persons, mostly engineers and scientists, are now out of work. Some may possibly never again be employable in their specialty. Other shifts in technology idle craftsmen, who then have little hope that they may again ply their trade. Furthermore, as other countries increase their ability to compete effectively in our markets a variety of our people need re-education or retraining if they are again to be fully productive.

No longer can we educate or train with the old assurance that the effective period of utility of such education or training will be the full time span to retirement. In the future a person, white collar or blue collar, may typically expect to learn, gain experience in, and work at two or more careers within his normal work life.

"What is happening is not merely a turnover of the images and image-structures in our brains. Our relationships with these images of reality, upor which we base our behavior, are growing on average more and more transient. Today change is so swift and relentless in the techno-societies that yesterday's truths suddenly become today's fictions, and the most highly skilled and intelligent members of society admit difficulty in keeping up with the deluge of new knowledge -- even in extremely narrow field."(5)

What we shall need is a highly individualized means for people, mature, raising a family, contributing to other facets of society, to learn a new occupation with which to replace the one that currently requires their full effort, but which will disappear before they retire. Otherwise we shall surely waste taxpayers' dollars, frustrate teachers, deny ourselves for long periods the fruits of many of our best brains and hands, and worst of all, humiliate, demean, and degrade capable, sensitive, dedicated human beings.

The task of retiming our whole system of education and training is a formidable one. We must, on both sides, rise above selfish convenience and precedent. We must tear down the traditions of practice which isolate us. We must, in short, find ways to integrate learning with doing, interweave study and practice, make education and training a continuing or at least a recurring part of living and working.

Many of the past suggestions for combating career obsolescence have not proved to be broadly practicable. Constant updating through reading and society activity which we expect of the professional in private practice, such as the doctor or the lawyer, is not realistic

for the employed professional, such as the engineer or scientist. The different environment in which the employed professional works; his interdependence with others in his section or project team; the time limitations imposed by relationships with other sections or units; the requirements for job-related travel or overtime, all make the private practitioner's methods impractical. Similarly, the often proposed sabbatical year, so successful in the academic world, is not acceptable. The capable, rapidly progressing employee is reluctant to remove himself for so long from assignment to new challenging tasks, from broadening or instructive transfers, and particularly from promotion. What we need is some new cooperative linkage between education and work. Quite likely it will be off-campus, and most of it individualized.

With marriage at lower ages, jet travel, and instantaneous worldwide communication, education and training have to be "immediate" and intensely "real". As a person moves through life, assuming increased responsibilities, these two requirements bear even more heavily. That is to say, we just shall not have the time to interrupt learning for working nor working for learning. We shall more and more need them not in tandem but in parallel.

We are not without resources or experience for improving our timing. Already functioning are a whole variety of work-study programs, extension programs, and campus originated closed-circuit TV workplace instruction programs. Many organizations are already offering their training capabilities to others or are engaged in cooperative programs with others. Some of the engineering societies are moving aggressively into the field. New technologies and the possible added flexibility

of a shorter work week may make the climate right for positive, creative efforts toward our often-expressed hope for a lifetime learning opportunity.

Another timing problem is more difficult to see. It is the problem of when to educate or train for what. Both in education and business we have been worsening this timing problem. With good intentions on both sides, the academic world has sought better forecasts of the types and quantities of occupationally-skilled people needed. At the same time, the business world has been pressing, either directly or perhaps more powerfully through the indirect avenues of its recruiting, its financial support, or its participation in conferences and courses, for increasing the supply for various occupations. The same comment could equally apply to other users including the government, the health institutions and even the schools themselves. The whole process is a case study in supply and demand -- but not quite. Unlike most goods and services, the output of the educational institution has a very long use-life. Thus, we are becoming increasingly aware that we are compounding our timing faults. We see the swing of the pendulum from under-production to over-production and back again, gaining alarmingly both in rate and amplitude.

After several years study in Minnesota, a joint effort of the state government, the University, private business firms and an independent research organization begins to show that the measures of need for type and quantity of occupational skills, when based upon individual organization's forecast totals, are seriously in error.

While no one yet has a reliable crystal ball, we in education and training do need to work diligently to develop better prediction

models. Unless we improve our own forecasting ability we shall be subjecting ourselves to a roller coaster future, not only costly and frustrating but cruelly disappointing to our students. On the other hand, better forecasts against the complexity and fast pace we expect in the future likely will indicate short-term variations in subjects required and in number of students per subject. So in meeting our timing as well as our relevance problems, the focus must be increasingly on the individual.

Objective

No successful evaluation of the effectiveness of our educational or training efforts can possibly be made absent a precise knowledge of their objective or objectives. Effective means, implicitly, achievement of the desired result.

I trust you agree with me that the primary objective of any education or training is a better life. It is to help the individual to discover, develop, and utilize his highest capabilities. It is to equip him to live with himself, and with others as with himself. There is no way that I know to do this "wholesale". No one can live your life for you. And learning, like living, is strictly an individual affair. This is our dilemma: how to so educate and train individuals that they can live together in an open, free, creative society, yet attain maximum self-fulfillment. That this is a growing realization is indicated in the following four quotations selected from recent publications.

A Harris Survey in November 1970 comparing student opinion and attitudes and the general public's understanding of those feelings concluded its report with, "Whether a better public understanding of these underlying attitudes of students would tend to bridge the 'generation

gap' is speculative at best. And whether the student understanding of prevailing public views would make them temper their tactics also is subject to some doubt. But a failure on the part of both students and the public to understand one another will leave untended an important source of potential confrontation and deep division."

Mr. Charles L. Gould in January 1971 put it this way: "Let me address myself to the critics of our society and of our Nation.... I protest those who campaign and petition and parade for individual rights but have no tolerance for the rights of those who oppose them. I protest those who profess to champion peace but resort to terror, violence, and blackmail to make their points....In short, I protest those groups and individuals within our country who champion any system at variance with the basic concept of equal rights, and equal opportunities....and equal responsibilities."(7)

The National Urban Coalition, in its Third Annual Report, stated as the goal of its various efforts, "To improve the quality of life in our cities and to enable all their citizens to enjoy that life."

Mr. William F. May, Chairman of the Board and President, American Can Co., wrote in February 1971, "Business is becoming more and more conscious of its responsibility to help improve the quality of our lives....I am discussing the things which give meaning to life.... compassion, love, concern...these are all basically religious ideas ....Religion embodies two mainstreams of human life. We have the tradition of the law which finds its highest expression in the religion of Judaism...We also have the tradition of love, with its roots in Judaism, which is interpreted in the life and teachings of Christ. These two traditions of law and love are major elements of every great

religion of the world...If we decided to build a society without religion, we would soon find that we would have to construct new constraints and new laws, very much like the old ones, to give our society order and meaning.

"However, the other tradition in religious teaching is equally as important -- the role of love, of compassion, of concern for others. Without it law would generate only despair....

We need a code of law which draws people, all people, to it because of its advantages to them. This ideal concept of law and order is embodied in the religious qualities of love, compassion, and concern for all mankind."(8)

More specifically, one problem in objectives for education may be our focus on scholarship. There are many ways to learn, not just the way the scholar learns. There is need for a whole galaxy of occupations, not just the pursuit of knowledge. Unfortunately, I fear we have so focused on getting into college and having a college degree that we are broadly sowing the seeds of despair and failure. We are making "drop out" more acceptable than vocational school. We are grinding out non-engineers, non-teachers, non-accountants in ever increasing numbers. They will not succeed because they have neither the driving interest nor the personal capacity for effective performance in the occupations for which their college years have supposedly prepared them. We need desperately to encourage potential computer maintenance men, or audio-visual technicians, or construction electricians confidently and proudly to prepare themselves for those occupations. We shall need their services and they shall live far more positive, satisfying and successful lives.

The error in our thinking is unmistakable. We have made our objective the education process itself -- and indeed just one small segment of that process. It is imperative that we reorder our objective, placing it where it rightly belongs, the preparation of the individual for a sound, self-fulfilling, positive life.

In training, as in education, we must be certain we have the right objectives. Only when we are focused on preparing the individual for improved performance, and personal career development will the results be sound because only then will he have the interest and the skill change which makes him more productive. This means doing training the hard way -- one by one in consultation with each employee's boss and his boss' boss. Never should he have group or class training of any of our employees except as those particular individual employees actually need that instruction, in that way, at that time.

A possible cause of our failure to see our training objectives clearly may be a faulty understanding of our environment. Most of us who do, or write about, or talk about, training think of it in terms of the large organization, such as GM, GE, TRW, IBM, or TWA. If we are not ourselves actually in, or studying, or commenting upon one of those named we nonetheless tend to have them as our model, regard them as characteristic of the whole, or at least exerting the dominant influence.

We are not alone in this error. It is the error which traps Charles Reich in his "Greening of America." The fact is that the role of the corporation is not dominant. The United States economy has not been, and is not becoming, a corporate economy. The number of

corporations has grown at about 6% per year since World War II. This does not mean business has gained an increasing share of the total society; it simply means the corporate form of doing business has slowly replaced the proprietorship and partnership. Yet even now less than one-third of all United States business enterprises are corporations. The size of corporations has not changed significantly in the past 30 years. Throughout the whole period the vast majority of business corporations have continued to be small. Currently about 94% of all of them have total assets less than $1 million. Only a little over one-tenth of 1% have assets over $100 million. So corporate mergers, including the conglomerate type, are a minor factor. Now, and over the past 50 years, all corporations added together have held a small, remarkably unchanging, share of the total wealth of this country, only 28%. Households hold about 44% of total wealth, the government about 21%. Over the past 40 years it has been the government share not the corporate share that has expanded at the expense of the others.(6)

This means training geared to what the other fellow does, whether management by objectives, planning, short-interval scheduling, or direct costing may be seriously off the mark. Our objective is not to have our people know what is available. It is, instead, to have them know what they need to know to do their own job better and to develop their own particular, individual talents so they can move up to the highest position of skill and responsibility for which they have the appetite and capacity -- and in so doing make our company sounder, stronger, more profitable.

When we look at our education and training efforts in perspective, then, we do see some hard evidence of shortcomings in relevance, timing, and objective. We also see something more. Most education and training is done in groups. Yet we know learning is an individual process. It happens in single brains, one at a time. We know individuals differ widely -- each learns in his own way -- each has his own experience on which to build the new learning. We know that life is pluralistic -- that man cannot live only on the fruit of the tree of knowledge. We know that the pace and complexity of living is steadily mounting. We should, therefore, come away from this conference with a reinforced conviction that focus on the individual, more tailor-made education and training is our mandate for effectiveness now and even more in years ahead. I know no better way to summarize than to quote Mrs. Sybyl Patterson, Director of New Subject Development, American Management Association. In February 1971 she wrote these three points:

> "First, people are growing more and more resentful of the fact that they are dealt with in the mass, identified too frequently by numbers, particularly that even more ubiquitous Social Security number. They feel there is little if any room for the human being to retain his personality.
>
> "Second, both in the educational world and in the business world, the sense of alienation is growing. Reforms must come in order to focus on the individual and give him a bigger piece of the action.

"Third, in this period of ferment and transition, it is vital to reawaken and underscore the conviction that society exists for the individual, not the other way around. In the final analysis, this country will thrive or deteriorate depending upon the hopes, dreams, strengths, and actions of people. In order for this nation to achieve positive objectives there must be a rebirth of confidence in the individual's ability to understand, support, and carry out the principles and philosophies that are absolutely essential to a humanized society, one that provides full play for individuality and the sense of individual importance that permits functioning as a free, responsible, thinking, compassionate, creative person."

NOTES

(1) Carl Byoir & Associates, Inc., "The View From Washington" Vol. XXXII, No. 24 - June 14, 1971

(2) J. Sterling Livingston, Harvard University Graduate School of Business Administration, "The Myth of the Well Educated Manager"
Harvard Business Review, Vol. 49, No. 1 - January-February 1971

(3) Harrison F. Dunning, "Educational Consumerism - Fulfilling Society's Demands for Quality, Economy, and Relevance From the Business Point of View"
American Management Association. Proceedings - 6th Annual Conference and Exposition on Education and Training, New York City - August 3-6, 1970

(4) Arthur A. Shenfield, "The Roots of American Discontent"
Rockford College, Rockford, Illinois - April 1971

(5) Alvin Toffler, "Future Shock"

(6) Neil H. Jacoby, Graduate School of Business, University of California, "The Myth of the Corporate Economy"
The Conference Board Record, Vol. VIII, No. 6 - June 1971

(7) Charles L. Gould, Publisher, San Francisco Examiner, "Pollution, Politics and Protest",
An address to the San Francisco Rotary Club, January 17, 1971

(8) William F. May, "Religion in American Life"
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G. E. Morse, August 3, 1971